

Copy of a letter written by Daniel Stewart, Sr. to his brother, Mr. Alexander Stewart, Dundee.

Eramosa 10 Oct. 1836.

Dearly Beloved Brother:

Your last letter dated the 27th March, 1836, came to hand in due time and I now take the opportunity of a person going to Britain to send you a reply.

I acknowledge my negligence in letting your letter lie so long unanswered and would wish to be excused by you as my silence was certainly not caused by coldness or indifference towards you. I knew you would hear about us by some of our family, who wrote to their friends in the old country and therefore I was not in such a hurry as I could have been had that not been the case. You will therefore, I hope, pardon me for this time and I must try to be more punctual in future.

I cannot give you a great deal of news, not being in a position to know how all the affairs of the country are managed. But this you can know by the newspaper. Our present circumstances and future prospects will interest you more than the news of the country. I will therefore try to let you know how we are situated with respect to the things of this world and the next.

We have been under the protection of the Father of Mercies ever since we had a being. Goodness and Mercy have followed us all the days of our lives. The Lord preserved us amidst the raging waves of the mighty ocean. He turned the storm into a calm, and brought us in safety to land. He watched over us in all our journeyings through this country of strangers. He has established all our goings so that now after all our voyagings and travels we are comfortably and we hope finally settled. We could not expect to be better situated than we are. We have abundance of the necessaries of life and to spare. We have our abode in a good settlement; are surrounded by kind and obliging neighbours and enjoy all the privileges which we had in Scotland and many others that we knew nothing of when there. I assure you that an industrious man if blessed with health can do well in this country. I would not leave my present home to live in my former manner for a good deal. But this is not a country for idlers. If a person expects to live comfortably here without working he will be much disappointed. It is because some have come here in expectation of being able to go about idle that the country sometimes is evil spoken of. But I believe that there cannot be found an industrious person that has had his health, who will say that a poor man can be better in Scotland than in Canada. For my part I would not go back. I have seen enough of both countries to convince me that this is by far the best for the poor man.

Eramosa is the name of the Township in which we live; it is about 50 or 60 miles from Toronto the capital of the Province, about 36 from Dundas, a very flourishing village, and 10 from Guelph, which last place is our nearest market town. Our nearest post office is also in it. The township is 12 miles long by about 5 miles wide, and contains about 44,800 acres. It is divided into strips called concessions which are about 3/4 of a mile wide and extend the whole length of the township. In Eramosa there are 7 of these strips containing 32 lots of 200 acres each. There is an allowance for a road 66 feet wide all round the township. There is likewise an allowance of the same width between all the concessions as also at convenient distances across so that no settler can be far from a road. But you must notice that I am speaking of allowances for roads only, as until they are worked, they are only to be distinguished by marks on the trees, and unless it be some public road leading thro the township to some other settlement the people have to open the concessions and make their own roads. Every person is obliged by law to work in the highways in proportion to the amount of their property. If a person's property is valued at £25, he has to work in the roads 2 days, if from 25 to 50, three days, 50 to 75 four days, 75 to 100 five days., etc.

The concessions and lots of every township are numbered. We live on lot No. 9 in the VII concession. The land is of the first quality but the climate is rather frosty, owing I think to the elevated situation, for we are considerable height above the level of Lake Ontario. But the place is very healthy and perhaps that is the reason. But the frost sometimes injures our crops we have always enough and to spare. We have now 24 acres cleared (that is the timber is all cut down and burned) besides 6 or 6 more cut down or chopped, as we call it. We hired others to chop these 6 acres as we were too much engaged with other things ourselves. Last year we raised upwards of 200 bushels of wheat (English measure) 50 of barley, 50 or 60 of oats, 200 of potatoes, about 400 stone of Hay, besides some peas. This year our wheat is not so good as last year owing to the severity of the last winter, which destroyed a good deal of wheat in some parts of the country. But we have still plenty. Our spring crops are very good and we have more than double the hay we had last year. Last year a great deal of grain was damaged by an extraordinary wet harvest; this year the harvest is later than usual, but we have had excellent weather. The farmers of this country do not depend so much for help in harvest as the Scotch farmers do, and the work is done more expeditiously. It is a rare thing indeed to see a Canadian woman working in harvest. Sickles are very rarely used except in back settlements. The principal instrument in use here in harvest is called a cradle, but I cannot describe it very well. It consists of a scythe with a frame fixed on the swath, that catches the grain as it is cut, so that it can be laid in near regular swaths, with the heads all one way. With this machine I have heard that an expert hand will cut down 2 or 3 acres a day, but this is in ground that is free of stumps; in the back settlements we cannot do so much. Another person with a rake gathers the grain and binds it up as fast as the cradle cuts it; The person who cuts and he who rakes get each a dollar a day. So you see that reapers are not in great demand in this country, particularly in the old settlements which are generally clear of stumps. But in the woods (as the new settlements are called) which are generally settled with old country folks, the sickle is sometimes used. All that we reaped this year was an acre of barley, the rest we managed with a cradle. The farmers here do not reckon on stacking much. They always try to have barns to hold all their grain. We have a barn but it does not hold all our grain. It is 26 feet square and built of round logs flattened at the ends so as to lie solid on each other and covered with shingles, which may be called wooden slates.

Our farm stock consists of a mare and a very fine colt (which was foaled in the spring a few days after I got the mare) a yoke of stout working oxen 7 years old and another of younger ones that haven't been worked much yet, 3 cows, 2 very fine yearling heifers, 3 young calves, 3 sheep, about 25 swine of all sorts and sizes besides poultry etc. We raise all our own provisions (except tea, salt, etc.) including beef, pork and mutton. Pork is the most common meat here, and it is very good. We bake our own bread, make our own sugar, soap, candles, etc. etc. The sugar is produced from the sap of the maple tree, the sap is to be obtained only in the spring when the days are mild and the nights frosty. It comes from the trees in drops. Sometimes it drops faster than at others, according as the weather is favourable. Two common pails full produce a pound of sugar as good if not better than the common kind with you. It is made by boiling the sap as it comes from the trees in large kettles, not until it is sugar (hard?), but until it is thick enough when it is taken off the fire and cooled. The sugar weather lasts only a few weeks in spring. The quantity made in a day depends on the number of kettles employed. Some seasons are more favourable than others for the production of sugar. Last spring we made between 250 and 300 lbs. Besides sugar we make molasses and vinegar from the maple sap. They are made in the same way as the sugar, only they are boiled less. What is meant for vinegar is boiled till sweet enough and then left to sour.

From our wool we manufacture mittens, stockings, etc. to

defend us from the cold weather of winter. From the ashes of our wood we manufacture two kinds of soap - hard and soft.

I have not room to describe particularly the processes of the different manufactures; you must therefore be content to know what things we do make.

The manners and customs of this country are quite different from those of Scotland in many ways, and the mode of farming which was carried on there would not succeed well here, especially in the woods, but we find it a great advantage to us that we were brought up in the farming business. Our farming utensils are not the same as yours. Our ploughs are nearly the same as some of yours, but we have not so many kinds. The harrows used in new ground among the stumps are made in the shape of the letter A. They are drawn by the sharp point so that they are not so ready to catch upon roots and stumps. The farming mills are so constructed that the grain is cleaned with little more than half the trouble that you have. In old settlements horses do the most of the work, but oxen are best adapted to the woods as they are easier kept and do not require so much attention. The cattle range through the woods during the summer. They sometimes stray miles away from home.. We find them by means of a bell fixed to one of them, which we hear at a considerable distance. Sometimes persons that are not used to the job get bewildered in the woods and are obliged to be out all night (I mean when they are looking for their cows). In the winter we thresh with them; that is we make them walk round and round on it in the barn until they knead it all out. It is done as clean and much faster than with the flail. We do not tie up our cattle except our calves, but some put up all their beasts in the winter; the general way is to let them range about the woods in summer and feed them with straw and let them have an open shed to lie in in winter.

But I have not room to give you any more particulars. Here we are, comfortably established in a goodly situation. We have no desire to return to live in Scotland. We have here everything that is necessary for life and godliness for time and eternity. We can sit under our own roof and have none to make us afraid. We are not kept in terror by hard landlords, great rents, high taxes, nor by anything of the kind. We enjoy many of comforts of this life and all the great privileges of the children of God. Having food and raiment-the enjoyment of this life, and the hope of a Glorious Immortality - What else ought we to expect? There is nothing more to enjoy. The Lord be praised for his wonderful goodness to us and to all the children of men. You have now, I am sure, obtained as much of this world's goods as is sufficient. I hope you will keep in view your latter end, that it may not come upon you unexpectedly.

I wrote a letter to Captain Stewart and have never heard whether or not he received it. I wish that you would find out and let me know. I must not forget to mention particularly how we all are as it respects health, and here we have abundant cause to praise the Lord for his goodness. We have not been free from sickness and trouble since we came here but Blessed be the Father of Mercies we have all been kept alive and at present we enjoy good health. John is a clerk in a shop in Dundas belonging to the Messrs Leslie formerly of Dundee. Peter and Ann are with us and the others live in Toronto. Margaret is at present on a visit to us. Peter, Margaret and Ann join with their mother and myself in sending our sincere love and regard to yourself and all the family and to Grandmother and all relations as if named. Tell Uncle John Rattery that I intend to write him next. I have addressed this to you on account of Grandmother, and I will fill up the space that is left of this with something for her, which I expect you will cause her to understand. We are all very anxious to hear from all our dear friends in Scotland. Therefore do not delay writing to us. Remember us kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Crew, Mr. Robertson and family, James Robertson of Heatherty and family, his brother John and William Brown and now I will write a few lines to my mother

and will here subscribe myself your sincere well wisher and affectionate Brother.

I intended to have a much larger space than this left for Mother.

My dear Mother - You will see by the above account of our circumstances that the Lord has dealt very graciously with us since we parted from you. We have great reason indeed to rejoice in his goodness. But not only are we blessed in our basket and in our store we enjoy all the privileges of the Disciples of Christ. We are within a very short distance of the place where we can meet with the children of God and commemorate His astonishing love to guilty sinners. We have every encouragement, my Dear Mother, to trust in Jesus as an all sufficient Saviour. We are weak but He is mighty. We are helpless but in Him is everlasting strength. We are unworthy, but He is all merciful and gracious. We deserve nothing but death and misery, but He bestows upon us endless life and everlasting happiness. O! let us then always rejoice in Christ Jesus, that when he appears we may also appear with Him in Glory. May it be our happy lot to meet before the throne of the Lamb! Then we will rejoice with great joy.
Till then Farewell.

D. Stewart.